

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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OUT OF THE RUT

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF

The East Lewisham Labour Party last year adopted an excellent idea for keeping in touch with individual members and for giving all concerned information as to the Party's programme and activities. A quarto monthly calendar sheet has for some time been issued to each individual member and this sheet gives a syllabus of the Party's work for the ensuing month on the one side with useful record and propaganda material on the other side. The sheet was begun as a single page printed one side and was later printed both sides, but it runs to four pages on special occasions. In each ward there are collectors who distribute the calendar sheets to individual members only, collecting threepence or fourpence per month as they distribute. It is now proposed to make the fourpence per month compulsory upon all individual members as the inclusive subscription to the National and Local Labour Party. We congratulate Mr. W. H. Spikes, the secretary, on this enterprise, which ought to be widely copied.

There are reasons why in Bury a vigorous attack shall be made upon Liberalism, and we have been much interested, therefore, in a four-page quarto fly leaflet, which has reached us, entitled, "From Liberalism to Labour." The title indicates a path that has probably been trodden by millions, not a few among them being notable figures in the national life of this country. Mr. Frank H. Edwards, the agent at Bury, whose contributions to our own columns have been frequently welcomed, has collected a series of articles from leading Labour people who have come over at different times from Liberalism, and the striking accounts of their conversion from the pens of Viscount Haldane, Rt. Hon. Charles Trevelyan, M.P., Rt. Hon. Noel Buxton, M.P., and Col. Wedgwood, M.P., for instance, make impressive reading. The leaflet is exceedingly well got up on good paper with good photographs of the writers, and it should do a good deal to push still

further down the poll the Liberal whose forlorn persistence is apparently the only obstacle to a great Labour victory in Bury.

We have received back copies of the Ardwick "Pioneer," a four-page monthly gratis journal, which has now been running four months in the Ardwick Division of Manchester. There is a guaranteed circulation of 10,000 copies, and quite a good sprinkling of advertisements. The paper appears to aim not only at giving Labour news and propaganda, but in being a journal that will have a welcome advent in the home. We note that there is a "Woman's Outlook," "Chat about Books," a "Children's Corner," "Radio Ramblings," etc., and that the paper generally is brightly written. These things are on the right lines, and we shall be surprised if the paper does not become a permanent success. It is quite among the best of the new beginners.

A number of Labour Parties are making attempts at "Young Labour" organisation. The following paragraph therefore, which we take from the Westhoughton "Labour Member" should prove interesting, as showing the nature of activities to be undertaken:—

"YOUNG LABOUR.—During the last month a Young Labour League has been established at Westhoughton, and already 82 members have been enrolled. The chairman, is Mr. J. Glover; joint secretaries, Miss Nellie Farrimond and Mr. Aubrey Hart; treasurer, Mr. J. Farrimond. Meetings are held at 7.30 every Tuesday evening at 9, Market Street. The character of the meetings is as follows:—First Tuesday, Loyalty Meeting (devoted to serious study of the heroes of the past); second Tuesday, Social Evening; third Tuesday, Educational Evening; fourth Tuesday, Service Evening. The immediate meetings are as follows:—July 1st, Loyalty Evening, speaker Mr. Wilfred Burke, subject "Robert Owen"; July 8th, "Prater Pie" and Social; July

15th, Educational, "The Housing Problem"; July 22nd, a Workers' Evening. The contribution is one penny per week, and attendance at the Loyalty Meeting is expected of all members. The library fund is supported by a contribution of one penny per month. The motto of the League is "Not thrones and crowns, but men." It is hoped that the movement will spread, and particulars will be gladly given by the joint secretaries or the agent. All young people and all who *feel* young are cordially invited to join."

On another page we reproduce the text of the Bill recently introduced into the House of Commons to limit the public and private subscriptions of candidates to Parliament in their constituencies. The Bill as it stands is obviously open to some amendment, and while it is hardly likely that our leisurely methods of legislation will permit its passage into law for some years to come, the proposal indicates an attitude of mind and a direction in which legislation is almost sure to be aimed in the comparatively near future. The matter is of great importance to election agents. Of no less importance is the proposal generally mooted to limit the catechising and questionnaires addressed to Parliamentary candidates. We do not believe that this matter is capable of being legislated upon, but the logic of events is forcing members of all Parties to accept the advice which has been tendered to them by experienced election agents to ignore the overwhelming number of questionnaires that are addressed to them. We have known of candidates who have endeavoured to please the sender of almost every questionnaire and have landed themselves in an inextricable maze of promises in consequence. Heaps of questions are no more than sheer impudence, or the machinations of the enemy, and conscientious candidates who try to answer all their correspondence fall an easy victim. What is wanted is the courage among candidates to refuse to have their lives made unbearable in this manner, and courage also to admit occasionally that they don't know everything upon every question under the sun. We could instance some extraordinary replies given by candidates to plausible questions which, if presented in another way, or in a full atmosphere of facts, would have secured a very different answer.

Our Change of Address

On and from the date of this issue the address of the Editor of this journal will CEASE to be at Whittington, near Worcester.

All communications for the Labour Organiser should in future be addressed to :—

H. DRINKWATER,
*Editor-Manager,
Labour Organiser,*

**LADYWOOD,
FERNHILL HEATH,
nr. WORCESTER.**

*Telegrams—"DRINKWATER,
LADYWOOD, FERNHILL HEATH"*
Phone to be announced later.

CAN IT BE DONE ?

HOW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP IS
BEING MADE TO PAY.

We have repeatedly pointed out in our columns the immense possibilities before Local Labour Parties who apply themselves assiduously to the task of securing the great unenrolled. We have pointed to the tremendous field for individual membership that exists amongst both men and women, and to the great disparity between our actual membership and our voting strength, within which margin lies an abundant field for energy and effort in securing new members. On other occasions Parties in difficulty have applied to us for advice, and the advice we have given has been to enrol members and so save themselves financially.

The Labour Movement is not without its doubting Thomases and its dismal pessimists who cry that the thing cannot be done. In addition, therefore, to the many instances we have given from time to time the striking figures presented below will help to confirm our opinion and advice.

"Two years ago the Ardwick Labour Party decided to build up a strong organisation in order to run Parliamentary, Municipal, and Guardian candidates, and a vigorous campaign was decided upon. Each Ward, with its various polling districts, to be thoroughly canvassed for members, a captain or captains, as the case may be, in charge of their polling districts to act as collectors, and with the help of a few splendid workers a start was made.

So successful was the scheme that the Executive decided to increase it by engaging an organising canvasser, with the result that the number of paying members in Ardwick Ward alone is now on its 4,000 mark, and when the present canvass is completed these figures will be considerably increased. Apart from the financial side, which, after all, is a most important one, we have been able to increase our political activities with the steady flow of contributions. There is not the slightest doubt the membership scheme added considerably to the glorious majority of 5,407 secured for Tom Lowth in December last.

The membership scheme is within the reach of all, is entirely on a voluntary basis of a penny per week for men, and a halfpenny per week for women. This is collected monthly by the captains or collectors, who mark same on the

members' cards. Allowances are made in case of sickness, slackness and out-of-work, so that arrears do not accumulate through these causes."

We are sure our readers will join with us in heartily congratulating the Ardwick Labour Party upon their enterprise.

In our issue for March last we announced that the Barrow Labour Party had launched a scheme for the collection of weekly sums from members—as low as a farthing per week being taken. In private conversation certain of our friends expressed amusement at the idea, and doubt that such a scheme could succeed. In our April issue, however, we were able to announce that a weekly income of £18 odd was already being collected, and to-day we are able to congratulate the Barrow Labour Party *on having passed the £300 figure.*

The remarkable advance of the Woolwich Labour Party in individual membership has been before commented upon in our columns, but the figures for the June quarter are now to hand showing that the increase is continuous. During the April-June quarter there was an increase of 368 members (203 men and 165 women), and the total individual membership at Woolwich now stands at 3,834. At the beginning of the year, after clearing the books of all lapses the figure was 3,040. From an analysis of the figures before us we note that out of 14 wards, all but one made an increase in membership, so that the progress is not only genuine but fairly uniform. As in other places we note that these results largely depend upon a proper appointment of ward secretaries, polling district secretaries, and street captains, who prove the backbone of the Party's organisation.

As we go to press we have received a copy of a most timely and invaluable pamphlet just issued by the Independent Labour Party Information Committee, entitled, "Six Months of Labour Government" being a reply to the Unionist publication entitled "Five Months of Socialist Government." We shall review this pamphlet next month but in the meantime would strongly urge literature sellers in all parts of the country to lay in an immediate stock, for this particular pamphlet ought to sell like hot cakes.

THE ORGANISATION OF PROPAGANDA.

A NEW SERIES OF ARTICLES BY THE EDITOR.

(Continued.)

There is a class of meeting for propaganda purposes which we have come to know as "educational" meetings. Of course all meetings are, or should be, educational meetings, but the meeting commonly referred to is one primarily for some special study purpose. The audience may be selected or public, but in any case they come prepared for serious attention and platform arts are at a discount.

Now this type of meeting is of tremendous importance to the Party itself. Such meetings are usually intended for those actually at present connected with the Party, and the policy behind them is a recognition of the fact, which none of us must be blind to, that, as a growing Party, we have in our ranks a large mass of undigested material. In other words, we have large numbers of adherents who are people who adhere to the Party but have never yet fully understood its principles and policy in all their bearings. Sometimes the intention is to educate our own ranks intensively on special lines so that more intelligent thought and action should result. All these things are good, and one need not grudge the more advanced thinkers of our Party the position they have attained in almost monopolising educational work of this character. If they have been smart enough to recognise the necessity and the demand, all credit to them.

There is undoubtedly a great field for propaganda by educational meetings within the Party. I need not refer to the organised classes conducted by schools and institutions specially interested in economics, history and so forth. Here I want to refer only to the humbler work lying at the door of every local Party. It is not enough merely to make adherents, one must hold them and educate them, and educational meetings for those within, or those on the fringe are an imperative function in every part.

Labour churches have in the past proved a useful medium for conducting education. As the local organisations of the Party have grown, other opportunities, however, now occur. It

always seems to me that the Men's Sections who have little else to do are ideal bodies to be charged with the organisation of educational propaganda. Sometimes the work may be tacked on to that of Ward Committees. Who shall do the work is largely a matter of local circumstance, but done it must be.

Turning to outdoor meetings we find here the crudest form of propaganda, although a most effective one—I am afraid in the minds of some of our friends the "one and only" method of propaganda, which, of course, it isn't. As compared with, say, 15 or 20 years ago, I think it would be generally admitted that in comparison with our strength our outdoor activities to-day are far below what they were. What is of greater importance is that our opponents' activities at the same time have greatly increased, and there is room for us to pause at this circumstance. It is one of great omen for our Party. I know not only of towns but almost of whole counties where in the length and breadth of them there may not be an outdoor meeting in a month. I know also of quite large towns that seem to have forgotten the way to hold outdoor meetings—except at election times, and of others where the initiative is either wholly with the Liberals or the Communists. This is bad, and while it may be a symptom of the growth of our respectability it indicates a sterility in parts that is a danger.

There was, of course, much in the old type outdoor meeting that was wasted effort, but an outdoor meeting need not be cheap nor an outdoor speaker the butt of the passers-by wit. The Party resources in almost all places are to-day equal to the organisation of really effective and well-educated outdoor meetings. We can command good crowds and ought to get them, and literature should be there for sale.

We will, therefore, next turn to the organisation of literature propaganda, which presents many phases for our attention. We will not concern ourselves here with *what* is written, or *how* things should be written, nor with any question of policy at all, but will deal solely with the mechanical side of the matter, assuming (quite improperly, of course) that all literature is good, and that our aim is exclusively to get it into the right hands or secure its good distribution.



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Broadly speaking, literature finds its billet either by purchase or by gift, though sometimes it is also borrowed, or even stolen !

"Who shall sell literature ? " is one of the first questions to be asked and here let it be said that it is an axiom in these matters that if the ordinary channels of trade can sufficiently and readily enough supply a demand, and if the demand is sufficient, then these channels of distribution are the best. The best because they are psychologically so. The man who buys of his own free will and who buys in a free and open market is without that element of suspicion which will always affect some people when they buy from a man who advertises his own wares. The man who buys his literature, as he thinks, freely, from a shop, or stall, has less of that suspicion that he is about to read an *ex parte* case, than he who, under mental duress, has bought a copy from the pushful literature seller. Dear me, it is the innocence of the British public in this respect, and their fond belief that they can buy what they choose that bolsters up the power of the British press. Did they but buy papers under

compulsion, or were they taxed a penny or twopence a day to obtain them, the public would be mighty critical of their contents. Anyway, the psychological point is something that should not be lost sight of. It is of prime importance therefore, that one should try to foster book-shop sales. One does the same thing quite naturally with the "Herald" at newsagents, and it is, of course, everywhere realised that the newsagents' sale of the "Herald" is a better thing than a similar sale through our own channels. It is a part of the work of the organisation of propaganda to encourage the sales of the "Herald" through the newsagents ; and it is the same thing to seek to encourage the sale at book-shops of the current popular book with Labour leanings.

We will assume that a desirable book has been published and is widely announced. Then at once approach the local bookseller and get a display. A display in the windows will secure sales and ordinarily the bookseller doesn't trouble much whether he agrees with the book or not so long as it is a good seller. In the early days of our Movement it was a good thing to

support our own literature stalls for whatever book one wanted, but it is no disloyalty to the literature department to seek to foster sales at the booksellers now. An immense quantity of Labour literature has to be bought over the counter, before ever the world becomes safe for democracy. But, fortunately, the millions are becoming more and more ready to read it. The sale of Labour books must become as easy as the sale of the life of Henry Ford. And why not?

At the same time I am a profound believer in the establishment of a literature department by every Local Labour Party. Until we have both fostered the demand, and created the ready supply through trade channels, there is an enormous work to be done by direct sales to the public, and mostly of sales that would not otherwise be accomplished.

In the first place let there be a literature secretary, and a literature committee, with sufficient money to commence business and sufficient brains to carry on. This is not a hard requirement, but it is an essential one. Those who order literature should have the capacity to judge its value both from the propagandist and financial standpoint, and they should have the enterprise and the time to seek opportunities for sale.

Literature sales can go on all the time. The literature stall at the club or offices of the Party is a desirable permanent arrangement, and a certain supply of literature at every meeting, with special supplies on suitable occasions is a further *sine qua non*.

It is a good plan to interest women in the organisation of the literature department for their skill in display is an asset in setting out stalls. It is worth while procuring proper materials for erecting stalls and getting into the habit of erecting the same type stall on every occasion. A little ingenuity will evolve a simply-erected model, capable of being stocked rapidly and cleared easily. A little practice will then save a lot of labour and a lot of time, and officers who are used to stocking (and taking stock) and selling, can accomplish wonders. Above all, *know what you sell*.

In many places there is a good opportunity through clubs and similar organisations for the establishment of

book clubs. One must not forget at any time that it is not only the general public, but our own Movement which has something to learn, and the book club is essentially the thing for the further education of secured supporters.

Another helpful device for promoting sales is to see that sufficient announcements are always made of new publications. We have learnt how to decorate halls with "Herald" and "New Leader" posters, but a mass of literature of first-rate character is still published by the Movement and its very existence unknown, even to the active spirits. A list of new publications or pamphlets stuck up in a prominent place is some help, but announcements might be more frequently made from platforms, by the chairman at Party meetings, and through the Local Party news-sheets. The Labour Party seems to have suffered from a lack of advertisement by these means, and very many of its most useful publications pass unknown.

(To be continued.)

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Correspondents are required to give their full name and address, not, however, necessarily for publication. Replies from general correspondents cannot be given through the post. It is imperative that where a reply depends on a statement of fact (such, for instance, as qualification of an elector to be on the register), the fullest information should be given.

Question.—I would be glad of your advice on the following query. We have recently had a Guardians' Election and after the poll had been declared I was called in to the polling station where I found 35 empty bottles of Bass (two cases having been sent back empty). These, I presume, were part of the refreshments for the Returning Officers' staff, which consisted of eight persons. Then I found these had been sent from the successful candidate's home. Under my instructions the bottles were kept in the room and were seen by the headmaster in the school the next morning, and also by the school correspondent. They were removed after a message had been sent to the successful candidate's home. What is your advice thereon?

Answer.—The particulars afforded above are somewhat hazy, though we imagine that haziness would not be confined to one quarter in this matter, for certainly the eight gentlemen who consumed 35 bottles of beer (presumably in the short interval after the count), would have suffered a certain cloudiness the next morning. From the facts disclosed it is not altogether clear when the bottles arrived, or how long or over what period the debauch was spread out. Presumably our enquirer was too much appalled by the scene of desolation presented by these empty bottles to get the facts exactly as they should be. Anyway, while no actual legal enactment appears to have been broken a thoroughly indecent and reprehensible orgy appears to have taken place, and we would advise our correspondent to give every possible publicity to the facts, and, if possible, secure a discussion on the matter at the next meeting of the Guardians, taking care to see that the press get hold of the matter. No one objects to an after-the-poll civility on the part of a victor, nor to a reasonable extension of hospitality even to presiding officers

and their officials, but the present case seems to have gone outside the limits of propriety and reason.

Question.—An interesting point has arisen concerning the organisation of our Divisional Party. Could a Women's Section appoint delegates from their section to attend the annual meeting of the Divisional Party, or a Conference for the purpose of selecting a Parliamentary candidate? We are divided on this point.

Answer.—This question obviously has reference to a Divisional Party formed under model rule sets B and C for Divisional and Local Parties in county constituencies. In the rules for Local Labour Parties in county divisions a distinct provision is made for the representation of Women's Sections on the Local Party General Committee, but in regard to the Divisional Party, women are represented through the delegates of the Local Labour Parties, and from Polling District Committees, and provisions are made that some of these delegates must be women.

As the point is of some interest it might be worth while mentioning that in the case of single and undivided boroughs the sections—men and women—appoint delegates direct to the General Committee. In divided boroughs the position is much the same as with Local Parties in County constituencies, but the Borough Labour Parties slightly differ from the Divisional Parties in County Divisions in this matter. Thus, while the rules for County Divisions are as above-mentioned, with Borough Labour Parties a specific provision is laid down as to *how* the women representatives from the Divisional Parties shall be selected. It is enacted that the Divisional Labour Party representatives to the Borough Party shall include a representative *directly elected by the Women's Section*.

Question.—I have a case of a woman who is in business in —shire, whose husband resides in —. She has not returned here for over a year, but her name is still retained on the register. I have objected to the retention of her name but I have been informed by the Registration Officer that she has a right to her vote on similar grounds to a woman whose

husband claims for business premises. I should feel grateful if you can give me any information on this point.

Answer.—The Registration Officer in this case is quite correct, so far, at any rate, as the Parliamentary franchise is concerned. A vital difference between the vote of a husband and that of a wife, dependent upon his qualification for the Parliamentary franchise, is that in the case of the wife no residential qualification is laid down, nor do the provisions as to successive occupation, etc., apply. A wife in this case is qualified solely because she is the voter's wife.

"A woman shall be entitled to be registered as a Parliamentary elector for a constituency if she is entitled to be registered as a Local Government elector in respect of the occupation in that constituency of (1) land or premises not being a dwelling-house of a yearly value of not less than £5, or of (2) a dwelling-house or (3) *is the wife of a husband entitled to be so registered,*" (i.e., in respect of land or premises or of a dwelling-house). There is no mention or stipulation as to residence.

In regard to the Local Government vote, a different rule applies. The woman above concerned is *not* entitled to the Local Government vote.

"A woman shall be entitled to be registered as a Local Government elector . . . where she is the wife of a man entitled to be so registered in respect of premises *in which they both reside.*"

A further point arises in respect of the above case. If this woman is registered for the Parliamentary vote in both —shire and in — she cannot vote at a General Election in both places.

"A woman shall not vote at a General Election for more than one constituency for which she is registered by virtue of her own or her husband's Local Government qualification."

Question.—I have had some difficulty over the registration of Absent Voters. The officials in charge of the register have stated definitely that they will not accept for the Absent Voters' List, bricklayers and others in the building trades who are working away from — owing to the depression. I had the same kind of difficulty last year over the railwaymen. The officials refused to

accept the names of railwaymen who worked trains from here to Bradford and other Yorkshire towns, and who could not get back to vote. I received a ruling from the Town Clerk's Department that only travellers going out of the country could so register in addition to seamen and men in the Forces. I won through eventually, but now I am trying to force the question in reference to men engaged away from —, but who still retain their homes here. I am putting in some 50 such claims. Do you think there is any reason why I should not succeed?

Answer.—It is difficult to understand the ignorance (or is it obstinacy?) on the part of the registration officials named. Rule 16 in the Registration Rules (Registration of the People Act, 1918, 1st Schedule) lays down that:—

"Any person entitled to be registered as a Parliamentary elector may, not later than the eighteenth day of February, where the claim is for the spring register, and the eighteenth day of August, where the claim is for the autumn register, claim to be placed on the Absent Voters' List; and the Registration Officer, if satisfied that there is a probability that the claimant may be debarred from voting at a poll at Parliamentary elections, held during the time the register is in force, shall place the claimant (if registered) on the Absent Voters' List."

The above rule is quite clear and distinct and confers a definite right upon such persons as our correspondent mentions, provided that they satisfy the Registration Officer as to the probability of their being away at the time of a poll. The editor of this paper has been registered as an Absent Voter merely because of the probability of his being away from home on polling day, and the rule is universally observed, though by no means sufficiently observed. We advise our correspondent to observe carefully on what grounds cases are dismissed. He should endeavour to prove to the Registration Officer the probability of his claimants being away from home, and if he has got some admission from the Registration Officer that he is satisfied on the facts as to the probability named there should be a good case on which to appeal to the County Court of the district.

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THE NEW FRANCHISE BILL.

VOTES FOR WOMEN AT 21.

By H. EASTWOOD, Secretary and Agent,
Bolton Labour Party.

The New Franchise Bill has now passed its first and second reading, and has survived the tender mercies of Standing Committee A. It now awaits its third reading, and the inevitable journey to the House of Lords. It has been my privilege to secure an advance copy of the Bill, together with a full copy of the whole of the amendments, and a full report of the speeches made in Committee. The Bill marks an advanced stage in the direction of votes for all men and women at 21, both for Parliamentary and Local Government purposes.

The minor effects of the Bill are as follows:—

1. The residential period of six months for registration remains unaltered.

2. All persons on the register at the time of the operation of the new Act will have their interests safeguarded, and will be entitled to vote if on the register apart from the new qualifications, or disqualifications.

3. Naval and Military voters will be entitled to be registered in respect of residence determined by their duties, and wives will be able to claim accordingly. As an illustration, this means that a man in the Army, Navy or Air Force, if living in ordinary domestic circumstances, say, at Aldershot or Portsmouth, will be able to vote in these districts as an ordinary voter.

4. Merchant seamen, pilots and fishermen, will be entitled to vote by proxy as absent voters.

5. Husband or wife of a person having business premises qualifications will be entitled to the Parliamentary vote.

6. Residence qualification is waived in respect to persons enjoying land or premises by way of descent, marriage settlements, devise or promotion to a benefice.

7. The "contiguous constituency" condition is abolished. The Parliamentary vote will now be allowed to all persons who have resided in *any* constituency for the qualifying period. He or she can remove from Penzance to Aberdeen, and still be on the register for the last constituency.

The main effect of the Bill is to grant votes to women upon the same terms as men (that is at 21) for Parliamentary and Local Government purposes, whether married or single. One or two comparisons may help. In this country there is no age limit for M.P.s. In France a man cannot be a deputy until he is 25. In the case of voters the age is 24 in Austria with 12 months' residence, in Bavaria, Saxony and Japan it is 25, but in most countries it is 21. The Bill thus brings Britain into line with the great bulk of the nations of the world. It does not apply to Ireland, for reasons that are obvious.

COMPARATIVE INCREASE IN VOTING STRENGTH.

The Franchise Act of 1832 added three per cent. to the register; and that of 1865 five per cent. The Act of 1885 added eight per cent.; the Act of 1918 added 50 per cent.; and the present Act about 25 per cent.

The last Act saw 18,388,000 persons on the register, and suggestions vary as to the number to be added by the present Bill. They vary from 3,500,000 to 5,000,000. The suggestion of the Rt. Hon. A. Henderson, M.P., is 4,600,000. Mine is 4,000,000. My reason is that not all who are entitled to be on are actually put on.

The suggestion of re-distribution inevitably arises. The basis of a constituency previous to 1918 was 30,000 (electors, not population). The new Bill will make it nearer 37,000. Present basis is on population and not electorate, estimated at 70,000. Whatever the basis, the increase will be very great. In Bolton, for instance, the largest double-barrelled constituency in the country, the present register is 85,613. After the passing of the Act, it will be over 100,000.

It is historically true that an appeal to the country, based on re-distribution, follows very closely after an extension of the franchise. This will not necessarily follow in the present instance. Instead, a new clause has been added to the Bill which reads "His Majesty *may* appoint Commissioners to consider as soon as may be after the passing of the Act, what changes in the distribution of seats should be made in consequence of the provisions of the Act."

The Labour Government, in addition to deciding that re-distribution will not automatically follow the passing of the Act, has also decided that an appeal to

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the country will not be made as a result of the extension of the franchise,

To sum up, I suggest that the Bill will at least automatically increase the cost of surveying, of registration, and of elections generally. Ninety per cent. of the added votes will be votes of women and every agent should immediately address himself to the task of educating and organising these new voters, so as to harness their influence on behalf of the Labour Movement as a whole.

Along these lines only shall the splendid pioneer work of Hardie, Lansbury, the Pankhursts, and many others bear full fruit.

Described as a "very real contribution to the knowledge of the Bill," an address on the new franchise proposals was given by Mr. H. Eastwood, secretary and agent to the Bolton Labour Party, to the quarterly meeting of the Bolton and District Registration Officials' Association, at Leigh. Mr. J. Dickinson (president), clerk to the Westhoughton District Council, presided.—*Bolton Evening News*.

In order to maintain a correct balance of interest for all classes of our readers we have again held over this month our excerpts from the judgment of H.M. Judges in the Oxford Election Petition. Our readers will appreciate that the contents of the "Labour Organiser" require a careful balance to meet the interests of those engaged both in the general and technical sides of organising work, and the inclusion therefore, in this issue of additional legal matter would not have been desirable. The articles will, however, appear next month.

THE MAY "LABOUR ORGANISER"

SPECIAL APPEAL.

The above number of the "Labour Organiser" was rapidly sold out but we have since received a number of requests for this copy which we are unable to fulfil. Will those of our wholesalers who have spare copies of this number on hand oblige us by returning same. Full allowance will be made.

THE SECRETARY'S PAGE.

HELPS AND HINTS IN SEASON.

The Autumn National Campaign of the Labour Party which it is proposed to run from 15th September to 27th October will provide a good deal of work for Labour Party secretaries, though its effect should bring that encouragement and invigoration to the Movement which in itself is a good reward. The campaign will be run on the lines of meetings to be addressed by Cabinet Ministers, and other leading M.P.s, and details will shortly be announced. The Party is to bear the principal cost of the meetings and take collections for the Fighting Fund. What would have happened without the latter at the last General Election goodness only knows, for the Headquarters' timely aid put spirit into many a flagging movement and made victory possible in many places. The campaign, therefore, will also be used as a special effort on behalf of the Party's Fighting Funds. The meetings that are to be held will be under the general supervision of the district organisers, and those officers are likely to have a busy time during the campaign. All power to the big push.

In another column will be found some interesting information as to the methods and progress being made with individual membership in certain places. A number of Local Labour Party reports have reached us lately in which we have been surprised to note no mention at all of individual membership, and apparently the matter of numbers has been considered of no importance. In almost all these places there is other abundant evidence to show that the Parties concerned lag far behind the times and that they are among the horde who struggle along, living from hand to mouth, hoping against hope that some Trades Union will come along to drop manna from the skies. The secretary who would make the Party a real power must see to it also that his Party attains independence. The surest way to this is to keep pegging away making new members.

We were recently present at a meeting at which the suspension of Standing Orders was moved and seconded and duly carried, when it was afterwards

discovered that there were no Standing Orders at all! We are afraid that the absence of Standing Orders is a very common occurrence, but now that Local Parties in almost all parts of the country are becoming thoroughly settled down it is a prime necessity for the good conduct of business that Standing Orders should be thought of and adopted. The model rules of the Labour Party were not intended to act in substitution of local Standing Orders for the conduct of business, and they do not attempt to go as far as this. In practice a good many situations arise which throw an unfair burden on the chairman and secretary, and an improper onus on those responsible for the conduct of business. A few simple Standing Orders would obviate this. Mr. Walter Citrine's "Labour Chairman" contains a very good code, and these might be adopted in most cases with very little alteration.

With the approach of the winter months there will naturally be a very large increase in the number of indoor meetings. With the growth of women's organisation there has been an increase also in the number of day-time meetings and organisations which possess rooms which may be used during the day-time are in a fortunate position. From time to time we have received from various local organisations a copy of their monthly programme, and in quite a number of cases a quite excellent syllabus has been prepared showing all the meetings that are due to be held in the ensuing month by the various branches and subsidiary bodies which comprise the Party. This has not always, nor everywhere, been possible, but with the settlement above referred to there is now an opportunity for the bulk of Local Labour Parties to consider their programmes well in advance; and it is a very great help when it is possible to publish a list showing all the meetings for a month ahead. Some Parties are in the habit of circulating such a programme as a typewritten news sheet with other interesting matter, while other more fortunate Parties publish the programme in their newspaper. Not only is the publication of a programme an advertisement of the Party's activity and an encouragement all round, but it leads to better attended meetings and the avoidance of a good deal of inconvenience.

Coming events cast their shadows before them, and the "November" Municipal Elections are already creating interest in many places. It is not inappropriate to remind officers of the method for the selection of candidates as laid down by the model rules of the Party. In single and undivided boroughs the E.C. of the Divisional Labour Party receive nominations, and these require the endorsement of the General Committee. Such accepted candidates have then to be submitted to the Ward Committee (where the General Committee have approved a contest), and the candidate or candidates are finally selected at a Joint Conference of the Ward Committee and the General Committee. Divisional Labour Parties in county constituencies have no direct concern in Municipal Elections, and where a borough forms part of a county division its own Local Labour Party (formed under Rules Set C.) goes through the same procedure as that just mentioned for single and undivided boroughs returning a Member of Parliament. In the case of divided boroughs a special set of circumstances exist, in which it is necessary to reconcile the interests of the Central or Borough Labour Party, who have to consider the whole borough, with the interests of the Divisional Labour Party, who are concerned only with one Parliamentary seat with possibly three or four Municipal seats. Here the General Committee of the Borough Labour Party decides the electoral policy and programme of the Party with regard to local elections, and in consultation with the Divisional Labour Parties they determine the wards to be contested. Thus it will be seen that the Divisional Labour Parties are not autonomous in this matter, but a course is laid down by which co-operation between all the wards of a town is procured. Candidates are nominated to the Executive Committee of the *Divisional* Labour Party, and must receive the endorsement of the General Committee thereof. A list of such approved candidates is submitted to the Ward Committee (where a contest has been approved) and selection is made at a joint conference of the Ward Committee and the General Committee. The E.C. of the Borough Labour Party have the final

(Continued on page 18)

FORMS AND PRECEDENTS—continued.

We print below a further selection of useful forms which will be found of interest and value to our readers.

Maidstone Labour Party.

Membership Card.

No.

Year ending.....192

Name

This Card is a receipt for Subscription to Party Funds, and entitles the Holder to a voice and vote at the Party Business Meetings of his or her Polling District.

Secretary.

No.

Name

Address

(leave blank)

Reg. No.

(leave blank)

Polling District

T.U. | Co-op.

Subscription.....£ : 192

Clerical. | Canvass. | Collector.

Distribution | Speaker. | Chair.

Total....£ : :

This Counterfoil to be returned with cash immediately to Secretary.

No.....

Address

Polling District or Ward

Trade Union

.....192

Subscription : £ s. d.

Annual..... : :

Monthly..... : :

Weekly : :

Total £ : :

This counterfoil to be returned to Secretary when book is finished.

It will be noticed that the form of Membership here reproduced fulfils the threefold purpose of (1) providing the member with a certificate. (2) Providing a convenient means of transferring details and information from the ward officer enrolling a member to the central officer in charge of records, and (3) providing the latter officer with a card index of members entered, besides leaving the local officer in possession of his own counterfoil record.

.....DIVISION OF THE.....
 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION, 192....

Labour Candidate.....

To.....

I, ... Election Agent to.....
 a candidate at the above-named election, do hereby appoint you to act as
 my Sub-Agent for the Polling District named in the first schedule hereto
 attached, from the present date, for the purpose of the said election, and I
 agree to pay you the sum or sums mentioned in the second schedule attached
 as a fee to include all expenses other than election expenses as covered in the
 authority mentioned in the third schedule hereto attached ; subject always
 to the faithful carrying out of the instructions hereto attached and such
 instructions limiting or extending the said authority as may hereafter be
 formed by me.

Signature of Agent

Election Agent to

Date

FIRST SCHEDULE.

SECOND SCHEDULE.

THIRD SCHEDULE.

*The above appointment form for Sub-Agents contains in a handy form the facilities for
 variation of area, pay, and responsibilities, which, in practice, most "county" Election
 Agents would desire to impose.*

BOLTON LABOUR PARTY.

Secretary and Agent,
H. Eastwood.

Spinners' Hall,
Bolton.
February 4th, 1924.

Dear Sir (or Madam),

I understand that you are desirous of claiming a vote at the forthcoming Registration Court so as to be placed on the Spring Register. I shall be happy to assist you in this matter. In order to enable me to fill in the necessary forms, I shall be glad if you will kindly let me have the particulars below at your earliest convenience.

Monday, February 11th, 1924, is the last day for claims, and therefore the details asked for should be returned to me *not later* than Saturday, February 9th, 1924. I shall be in all day waiting for these claims until 5 p.m.

Thanking you in anticipation.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

HERBERT EASTWOOD.

(Secretary and Agent.)

.....
Full Name

Address

Ward..... *Single or Married*

Householder or in Rooms.

Are you claiming Parliamentary or Municipal Vote, or both ?.....
.....

If a Woman, are you under 30 or over 30 ?

If you have removed between June 16th, 1923, and December 15th, 1923, please give the date of removal and both addresses.

Thanks very much.

LIVERPOOL TRADES COUNCIL AND LABOUR PARTY COOPERS' HALL, 12 SHAW STREET.

Agenda for Council Meeting, Wednesday, Aug. 6th, 1924 at 7-30 p.m. Prompt

SUBJECT.

DELEGATE'S REMARKS.

- (1) Minutes.
- (2) Correspondence.
- (3) Secretary's Report.
- (4) City Council Report.
- (5) Britannic Assurance Dispute.
- (6) The National Association of Theatrical Employees, and Olympia and Rotunda Theatres.
- (7) Other Business.

This Meeting will start promptly at
7.30 p.m.

This Agenda is the Delegate's Credential.
All fees are now due.

PLEASE NOTE.—Dates for Stadium Meetings : Sept. 14th, Sept. 28th, Oct. 12th, Oct. 26th, Nov. 30th and Dec. 31st, 1924 ; Jan. 25th, Feb. 22nd, March 29th, April 26th and May 3rd, 1925.

W. H. BARTON, Secretary

Head Office, 7 SPEKELAND BUILDINGS, CANNING PLACE, LIVERPOOL, to where all Communications should be addressed.

PLEASE TEAR OFF.

Will Delegates kindly fill in this Form and give the same to the Door-keeper.

Name of Society

Name of Delegate

Address

THE ABOVE IS A USEFUL AND CONVENIENT AGENDA FROM LIVERPOOL.

PETITIONS.

Petitions fall into four well-defined classes (petitions, recriminatory petitions, recounts, and scrutinies), and you will save yourself from a great deal of intellectual mistiness if you endeavour to comprehend quite clearly what they are : (1) There is the ordinary petition brought by A alleging B's election was void because of certain offences which he is alleged to have committed, either personally or by his agents ; (2) But A, if he was a candidate at the disputed election, may go further. He may say not only that B was not elected, but that, if the facts are examined, it will be found that he himself (A) was really elected. That is to say, he claims the seat. In that case B may reply by saying, " Even if I was not duly elected you were not, for you had also committed offences against the election law." That is to say B retaliates with a " cross-petition," or, as it is technically termed, a recriminatory petition, which will be tried after the original petition is

disposed of. (3) A may desire only a recount of the votes. He may be dissatisfied with the decision of the returning officer with regard to some of the disputed ballot papers, or he may have reason to believe that a bundle of 50 votes was misplaced at the last moment. The recount will probably take place at the Election Petitions Office at the Royal Courts of Justice, and only the *prima facie* aspect of the papers will be taken into account. That is to say, the aspect of the papers as they stand is conclusive at a recount. Even if you could identify the paper which was marked by a man whom you now know to be an unnaturalised alien, you cannot object to it on that ground. If it is plainly and properly marked it will be counted. (4) But by embarking upon the fourth class of petition (the scrutiny) you can, so to speak, get behind the ballot papers and scrutinise the qualification of the voters who marked them. In that case you will be ordered to furnish your opponent with particulars

of the votes to which you intend to object, and the grounds of your objection. You will object to the vote of Johann Niersteiner on the ground that he is an alien; to that of Benjamin Jones on the ground that he was employed for payment at the election; to the vote recorded in the name of Daniel Mason on the ground that Mason was in the hospital on the day of the poll and must, therefore, have been personated. And in this last case you may go to a good deal of trouble to prove that Mason, who is a political opponent, was personated, and you may satisfy the judges that he was. But when the ballot paper is turned up it may be found that Mason was personated in the interest of your own candidate, so that you have struck a vote off your own poll. That risk is one of the terrors of a scrutiny.

If a candidate, or his supporters or advisers, should think that there is a case for a petition of any kind, they will, as far as possible, sift and consider the evidence upon which they propose to rely. If they are satisfied of its soundness they will have a petition presented. This is done by lodging the petition at the Election Petitions Office at the High Court of Justice. With it, or within three days of its presentation, a sum of £1,000 must be lodged or security given to that extent. The petitioner or petitioners must be a person or persons who voted or had a right to vote at the disputed election, or else some person who alleges that he was a candidate thereat. Generally speaking, a petition must be presented within 21 days of the receipt, by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, of the return to the writ on the strength of which the disputed election was held. But when the petition alleges a specific payment corruptly made, by the member, or on his account, or with his privity, since the date of the return, then the petition may be presented within 28 days of such payment. And if the election is challenged on the ground of an illegal practice revealed by the return of the expenses (i.e., the omission of items which ought to be there) the petition must be presented within 14 days after the receipt of the return of expenses by the returning officer. Finally, if the petition alleges a payment made by the member or his agent in pursuance of an illegal practice, then it may be presented within 28 days of the payment

or other act upon which it relies. It is usual, however, to present the petition within the 21 days which I first mentioned; and as the case will then be only in a very undeveloped stage, the petitioner will probably allege every election offence known to the law—bribery, treating, undue influence, personation, illegal practices, false statements, illegal payments, and illegal hiring. When the return of election expenses is filed (14 days after the 21 days within which the petition must be lodged), the petitioner may possibly apply for leave to amend his petition by charging expenses omitted from the return, false declaration as to election expenses, and so forth. But before the case comes to trial he will be ordered by the Court to furnish to the respondent what are called "particulars" of all these charges and to do it in a certain form—that is to say, he will have to give names and addresses, dates, and definite statements. For instance, as regards bribery, he will have to transform his vague general allegation in the petition into separate specific instances and to furnish, in each case, the name and address of the person bribed, the name and address of the person who bribed him, the amount or nature of the bribe, and the date of its payment. Failure to furnish all the ordered particulars, or to furnish them in the precise manner specified by the Court, will lead to the charges all being struck out at the trial. I have seen a long array of charges vanish at one swoop because they were not in the form ordered by the Court. From this point onwards the conduct of the petition ceases to be a matter of election law, pure and simple, and becomes rather one of the collection of evidence. At this point, therefore, I bring my necessarily brief survey to a close.—*From "Practical Notes on the Management of Elections."* By Ellis T. Powell, LL.B.

(Concluded from Page 13.)

decision in case of dispute. It is most advisable to strictly follow the procedure here laid down, for the methods outlined have been well thought out in the interests of avoidance of disputes, and the rules indicate the best course by which the interests of all the bodies concerned can be reconciled into one sound purpose.

Members of Parliament.

(Limitation of Subscriptions Bill, 1924)

A BILL

To limit the giving of donations and subscriptions by Members of Parliament.

*Ordered to be brought in by
Mr. Hore-Belisha, Sir Arthur Shirley
Benn, Sir James Remnant, Duchess of
Atholl, Rear-Admiral Sir Guy Gaunt,
Mr. Kirkwood, Mr. Mosley, Mr. Sexton,
Mr. Arthur Henderson (Cardiff),
Mr. Masterton, Mrs. Wintringham,
and Mr. Ramsay Muir.*

*Ordered, by The House of
Commons, to be Printed
2 July 1924.*

[14 & 15 Geo. 5.]

A BILL TO

Limit the giving of donations and subscriptions by Members of Parliament. A.D. 1924.

BE it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

- 5 1. As from the date of the passing of this Act any person duly elected as a member of the Commons House of Parliament who shall at any time, directly or indirectly, by himself or his wife or agent, give any sum of money, subscription, or gift in kind to any person or body of persons resident in the parliamentary division which he represents shall be deemed to have been guilty of a corrupt practice within the meaning of the enactments set out in the schedule hereto, and the provisions of those Acts shall apply in all respects as if the offence created by this Act were a corrupt practice as defined in the said enactments, and as if the person committing such offence had been guilty of a corrupt practice as a candidate at a parliamentary election.

Penalties for gifts of money, subscriptions, &c.

2. Notwithstanding anything in this Act contained it shall not be deemed to be a corrupt practice as defined in section one hereof to make—

Exceptions.

- 20 (a) payments or gifts to any person habitually in whole or in part dependent upon such person ;
(b) gifts to places of worship habitually attended by him ;
(c) gifts or subscriptions to hospitals or other charitable institutions where such subscriptions or gifts have been given regularly during a period of five years to an amount or value not exceeding the average given during the five years previous to his last election ;
25 (d) gifts or subscriptions to bona fide political associations for the purposes thereof.

- 30 3. This Act may be cited as the Members of Parliament (Limitation of Subscriptions) Act 1924. Citation.

SCHEDULE.

Corrupt Practices Prevention Act, 1854.

Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Acts, 1883 and 1895.

SOME NOTES AND NOTIONS.

We once met a candidate who didn't believe in organisation. He lost his deposit—or to be more exact it was someone else's deposit, and what he lost was their confidence.

Attracting people to the Labour flag is a different proposition now that Labour has ceased to be a purely propagandist and socially unpopular movement.

Fifteen years ago a Labour Town Councillor was a *rara avis* with a national reputation. To-day they are multiplied like the weeds on the garden patch.

The criterion of successful organisation is everywhere much higher than 10 years ago.

Elections were once like cup-ties and only a comparatively few took part. To-day practically all are players and to-morrow it may be all. This fact has changed the nature of the game.

Labour organisation is not successful if it has merely created a caucus capable of imposing its choice upon the electorate. It is successful only when it is "broad based upon the people's will," and really large numbers of persons are taking part in the central and local business.

PREPAID ADVERTISEMENTS

SUNNY SUSSEX COAST. Holiday Camps at **NUTBOURNE** (near Bognor and Southsea) and **LANCING** (near Worthing and Brighton). Comfortably furnished tents, huts and house. Tennis Nutbourne. Illustrated booklet. Symington, Hambrook, Emsworth.

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FOR SALE—Parker's "Election Agent and Returning Officer," Fraser's "Representation of the People's Act, 1918" (second edition), Seager's "Parliamentary Elections and Representation" (2 vols.), Vacher's "Elections and Municipal Elections," etc. (2 vols.). All in perfect condition. The lot £5 5s. Single sales considered.—**E. Weatherley, 93, Commercial Road, Swindon.**

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of the

**National Association
of Labour Registration
and Election Agents?**

(Acts as the Trade Union
for Labour Organisers)



General Secretary: H. DRINKWATER,
Ladywood, Fernhill Heath, near Worcester

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